

THE WASHINGTON HERALD

PUBLISHED EVERY MORNING BY
THE WASHINGTON HERALD COMPANY
1322 New York Avenue. Telephone MAIN 2380.
CLINTON T. BRADY, President and Editor.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY CARRIER:
Daily and Sunday.....45 cents per month
Daily and Sunday.....\$1.40 per year
Daily, without Sunday.....35 cents per month

SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL:
Daily and Sunday.....45 cents per month
Daily and Sunday.....\$1.40 per year
Daily, without Sunday.....35 cents per month
Daily, without Sunday.....\$1.10 per year
Sunday, without Daily.....25 cents per month

Entered at the postoffice at Washington, D. C., as second-class mail matter.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1914.

The Progressives seem to think it is better to keep themselves alive and yell murder in 1916 than to permit a natural death to relieve them now.

The fashion arbiters have decided that the tight skirt must go. If this is true the world, which has been lagging to permit the fair sex to keep up, may soon resume its normal speed.

A woman has been awarded \$2,000 damages because a meal she ate on a Pullman dining car didn't agree with her. Her remarkable recovery is no doubt as satisfactory to her lawyers as to her physicians.

Prof. David Starr Jordan describes Gen. von Bernhardt as a "serene and courteous old gentleman who might easily be mistaken for a clergyman," but whose doctrine is "faith, hope and hate." We can't help being glad he doesn't live in Washington, even if we are neutral.

Wisconsin, it is announced, wants a Mann white slave law of its own. Wisconsin, at the last election, voted down a lot of rabid proposals, and a survey of some recent evil results of the Mann law suggests that it would meet with rude treatment at the hands of the electorate not only in Wisconsin, but in any State in which it might be proposed.

Some newspapers claim to have discovered proof that the railroads will be granted permission to increase freight rates, while others point to convincing evidence that the permission will be denied. Somebody is probably right, but up to the present time the Interstate Commerce Commission must be exonerated of the charge that it has leaked.

One thing seems quite certain. Mr. Irving Cobb neglected to get the censor to put his O. K. on the alleged interview with Lord Kitchener. Another thing that will strike most readers is that both Mr. Cobb and his paper displayed the story in a most amateurish way, giving preferred position to a lot of nothing that Mr. Cobb said to Lord Kitchener in reply to questions that were apparently intended to make the interviewer feel at home, and putting at the end the really significant alleged utterances that brought forth a denial from the British war office. Mr. Cobb evidently labored under the misapprehension that he was giving information to the war chief who no doubt depends on sources much nearer the front.

Mr. Thomas Adams, who is described as an "English housing expert," told the Federation of Women's Clubs, in session at the Public Library yesterday, that "the pulling down of slums is not a solution of the problem in itself. If you pull down slums and do not build model homes in their stead, you only create slums somewhere else, and leave property not earning." Mr. Thomas may or may not be a "housing expert," but he at least possesses common sense, which is about all that need be brought to bear on the problems now confronting Washington. A law has been enacted abolishing alley houses, and in a very few years a large number of poor families will be driven from the homes they now occupy. So far no provision has been made for their future. These people must have shelter and they are able to pay only a small sum monthly for it. Those statesmen who have legislated their roofs away, or their successors, will have to provide others. What are they going to do about it, and when?

The piling down of the District of Columbia appropriations for the next fiscal year \$1,600,000 below the estimates of the District Commissioners will be a shock and disappointment to those persons who want to see the Capital grow, as well as to the taxpayers. The bill marks a backward step, the total amount it carries falling about \$1,000,000 below the appropriation for the current year and the one-half payable by the District being about \$2,000,000 less than its estimated revenues. Not a single new project is provided for. The estimates sent to Congress by the Commissioners were meager enough, and might well be regarded as representing the utmost limit of economy; yet they have been still further hacked. When it is remembered that only one-half of the total appropriation comes out of the Federal Treasury—that the other half is paid by the people of Washington in the form of taxes—the economy proclaims itself of the cheese-paring brand. And another "pork" bill, containing \$50,000,000, is now in course of preparation.

Unless President Wilson and the District Commissioners can see their way clear to granting employees of the Federal and District governments at least two half holidays, as suggested by the Retail Merchants' Association, it will be necessary for the merchants of Washington to go to a good deal of trouble and expense to provide an opportunity for the clerks to do their Christmas shopping. Merchants and shoppers alike are confronted with a new problem this year in the form of the law forbidding saleswomen to work more than eight hours a day. Under the present system there is practically no time for shopping between the closing hour in the departments and the closing hour in the shops. The request that the departments be closed at noon on December 12 and 13 is therefore not at all unreasonable. The few hours of leisure granted could very properly be counted as a part of the Christmas holidays and the result would be a much happier solution of the difficulty presented by the eight-hour law than would the total disarrangement of the hours of employment in the big stores, which might otherwise be necessary.

Political Situation.

More than a month ago The Washington Herald predicted that when the final session of the Sixty-third Congress assembled a very large proportion of its members would come to say good-bye. The prophecy has been amply verified. Through defeat, failure to secure renomination, declination and other causes no less than 140 members who will answer the roll call tomorrow will not be seen in the next House.

It is just possible that this large inroad on the membership of the House will have its effect upon the attitude of Congress toward the President. Practically all of the Democrats seeking re-election last month made the President and his administration the principal issue of their campaign. They staked their all upon him and lost. This being the case there is opportunity for insurgency to manifest itself. Even if there should be no open hostility the President can hardly expect to find during the last three months of the session the complete subservience to his wishes which marked the proceedings of the last session. It now appears, therefore, that the President demonstrated great political sagacity when he insisted, previous to the election, upon securing the enactment of legislation deemed by him to be of vital importance. He must have anticipated the outcome at the polls. He evidently realized that the opportunity to frame his policies into laws would pass if he waited either for the short session which begins tomorrow or for the next Congress to assemble.

Under these circumstances it does not require the gift of prophecy to assert that during the approaching session the President will be in a quiescent mood. He will not suggest any legislation which will be likely to provoke controversy. The leaders in the House, for their part, will be content with passage of the appropriation bills and with the enactment of such routine matters as may present themselves. At the same time, troublesome questions may inject themselves into the proceedings. In fact, the House will have as its first business a vote upon a project to have the United States issue \$250,000,000 of its Treasury notes and deposit them in national and State banks in the parts of the country where cotton is the chief product. As security the Treasury would accept warehouse receipts. The outlook is for the defeat of this measure, but it is certain that the Southern members will not accept this outcome without manifesting a feeling of resentment. Conditions in the South are bad. A very large proportion of the cotton crop was raised upon borrowed money and owing to adverse weather was an expensive undertaking. There are no funds with which to repay the loans and the help of the government is the only salvation. The tobacco planters are also in sad straits and are asking assistance. While the representatives of the cotton and tobacco interests are not numerically strong enough to pass their relief measures they are in a position to make trouble should they decide upon retaliation. They may be content to accept a postponement until a special committee appointed in October can make its recommendation as to form of financial relief to be adopted, but if they insist upon blocking legislation until they are accorded consideration they are in a position to do so.

This means, of course, that the waters of the approaching session may not run smooth.

Many Other Important Matters Pending.

If it should be decided to confine the work of the session to the appropriation bills it will not be because of the lack of important matters demanding attention. Immediately after voting on the question of an issue of Treasury notes the House will vote upon two bills which through their direct relation to banking will increase the credits available in cotton-growing States. Both bills have already passed the Senate and have the support of the Federal Reserve Board. Under one of these bills banks in the South which hold much commercial paper but relatively few bonds could increase the emergency currency they can obtain upon security of commercial paper by forty or fifty million dollars. The other bill, by allowing banks which are members of the Federal reserve system to place on deposit with Federal reserve banks all of the reserves they now must hold in their own vaults, would increase the lending power of the Federal reserve banks which deal with the South to the extent of \$190,000,000. Then, too, there is a bill upon the House calendar which proposes to license warehouses through the Department of Agriculture, thus making cotton warehouse receipts more available as security. The outcome as to this legislation will be awaited with interest. It recalls the declarations of the Populist platform of 1896 and, to say the least, suggests radical innovations in the financial system of the country.

Another important matter which, it is asserted, the President will advocate in his message is the Alexander shipping bill which provides for the purchase and operation of merchant vessels by the United States government through a corporation which the government would control. To make these purchases the sum of \$30,000,000 is to be provided through the sale of bonds. The arguments in favor of the measure are that it would add to the strength of our merchant marine without the delay of waiting for construction; that it would provide steamers under the American flag to carry mails and merchandise; and that government-owned vessels would in effect regulate the rates charged by private lines for ocean freights. On the other hand, it is certain that the United States cannot contribute millions of dollars to the war funds of European nations, which would be the practical effect of the purchases, without exciting international protest. The State Department has already been advised by certain powers that they cannot look with indifference upon the proposed action and many members who might favor the proposition in the abstract are certain to advise caution in dealing with a problem that might result in unfortunate complications.

Trust and Railroad Legislation.

Fortunately for the country no further agitation of anti-trust legislation is likely. The Clayton bill is now a law and the administration ought to be content to give the business interests a rest until the new statute has been thoroughly tested. For this reason Senator Reed's amendment which proposes certain provisions making the law more stringent is not likely to be passed. The Federal Trade Commission is also an experiment awaiting demonstration. Everybody practically agrees that further disturbance of business would be unwise.

Railroad legislation is still, however, in an unsettled condition. The problem of mail carrying compensation is unsolved, although a most exhaustive report on the subject is before Congress. Incidentally, as showing one of the anomalies of our political system, it is interesting to recall the fact that the subject of railway mail pay was one to which Representative Tuttle, of New Jersey,

gave an enormous amount of serious study. He was a member of the commission to investigate the subject, devoted much time to mastering its intricate details, and during the debate upon the floor of the House was deservedly regarded as an authority. Notwithstanding all this, his constituency defeated him last month and now all his labor and study goes for naught. The railroads naturally desire more money for carrying the mails and the commission agrees that there ought to be an increase to the extent of at least \$3,000,000. Whether the railroads will get it is another question. There are also many bills pending which direct additions to safety equipment and these will entail large additional expense if enacted into law. The latter consideration, it may be remarked in passing, does not seem to have much weight with Congress.

The Question of National Defense.

Another question certain to be injected into the proceedings and which might, in time become a political issue concerns national defense. Representative Gardner, in the House, and Senator Lodge, in the Senate, are determined that the country shall know the facts in the case.

The administration is peace-loving in the extreme. President Wilson opposes any agitation of the subject of war preparedness and everybody knows that Secretary Bryan would avoid war at any cost. The horrors of the European struggle have undoubtedly increased the anti-war sentiment in this country, but there are many who believe, nevertheless, that the United States ought to have an adequate army and navy. Perhaps, after all, this question of national defense will rival in interest the efforts of the Southern members to secure relief for the cotton growers. At any rate, it is certain to develop two strong opposing factions in both branches of Congress and the outcome of the struggle may fix the status of the United States as a power among nations for many years to come. With this, as with everything else, there is no standing still. The United States must either go forward or backward. The session which begins tomorrow, together with the next Congress, must decide what step is to be taken and then it will remain for the country to justify or condemn that action at the polls.

That Matter of Preparedness.

The movement recently initiated by Representative Augustus P. Gardner to investigate the national preparedness for war seems to have nothing sinister in its intent. It does not suggest any immediate expansion of our military and naval equipment, but seems to be only a very natural and common sense demand to have the actual facts in the case made public. There is no doubt that it is a matter concerning which the American public has betrayed slight curiosity in the immediate past, and in view of the present chaotic state of things outside this country it might be well to know the measure of our resources.

At the recent dinner of the Economic Club, in New York City, Chancellor David Starr Jordan, of Leland Stanford University, made a vigorous protest against the proposition. "A great armament," he declared, "will bring victory—perhaps. It will never bring peace. When everybody is loaded somebody explodes. When no one is loaded no one explodes." This, perhaps, voices the opinion of a great majority of the conservative minds of the nation. Moreover, advocates of the theory of armament as a preventive of war are now discredited sadly by the course of events in Europe. It has been settled for all time that preparedness for war, whatever other virtue may be ascribed to it, is not a guarantee of peace.

There are few in this enlightened age who are disposed to undervalue arbitration as a means of preserving the peace of nations, but it is most uncertain in its operation. "Do you suppose that human nature has so changed that we can trust the future to arbitration?" asked Representative Gardner at the Economic Club's dinner. "There are cowards in the great peace hall at The Hague. Can you arbitrate race hatred? Can you persuade the Russian to love the German? Can you persuade the San Francisco labor leader to love the Chinaman? Can you arbitrate slavery? Why, an attempt to do it brought on the civil war."

It would be idle to deny that the present state of things in Europe has not only magnified our horror of war and our sense of its destructiveness, but has opened our eyes to the possibility that we may be compelled to resort to it as a dread alternative no matter how ready we should prefer to settle our differences with arrogant outsiders in some more pacific fashion. Whether such a chance may be near or remote we cannot predict, but the mere knowledge that it exists furnishes a valid reason for speculation over our state of preparedness. Even those who have been accustomed to dismiss further consideration of the matter with the rather superficial assurance that our geographical isolation gives us immunity from foreign invasion might now be expected to indulge a mild interest in such a matter as our national preparedness.

So there seems to be no strong reason why Representative Gardner's move should not strike a popular chord. Such an investigation as he suggests could be conducted without in any way compromising the peace-at-any-price-save-dishonor attitude of the administration and without doing violence to the peace-promoting machine so admirably engineered by Mr. Carnegie.

Congress.

There has been no denial at the White House of reports about a special session of the next Congress, to begin soon after March 4, but Speaker Clark, who might be expected to know something of the administration's plans, says he does not believe one will be held. His statement is reassuring for the country feels safer when the lawmakers are away from Washington. The program for the regular session includes the appropriation bills, the Philippine bills, conservation measures and the shipping bill. Then there are pending several labor measures, including the seamen's bill, which has passed both Houses and is now in conference, and the child labor bill, reported favorably from the House committee. When Congress opens the industrial relations commission will make the fight part of its report, which is expected to include many recommendations. If all of these matters were considered at length, not much time would be left for more important things, but Mr. Clark, who has clear notions as to what must have prompt attention and what can wait, says that Congress will not do a great deal at the coming session except to pass appropriation bills. It is to be hoped that he is right. The government will need money, and so these measures will have the right of way, but there is no occasion for haste in taking up the others. The shipping bill, providing for the establishment of a government steamship line, and the Philippine bill are mischievous makers and should be defeated if pressed at the short session.—Rochester Post-Express.

Unimportant It True

By DR. ERITAS

The situation in Mexico gets Villanous.

One breath of scandal makes the whole world talk.

The days are getting shorter, along with the rest of us.

Portugal seems to think she has a hand in the war, too.

Mr. Hobson seems to be trying to out-Hobson Hobson.

People who get full generally have empty pocketbooks.

It is all right to call a man a joker, but don't call him a joke.

The red, white and blue hosiery did not take well, for which nobody is grieving.

The average school girl would rather be a good dancer than carry off the class honors.

Walter Johnson has joined the Federals, but Von Hindenburg is still with the Germans.

There was once a Cabinet Officer who was not criticised, but he has been dead for a long time.

American heiresses will probably find dukes and counts a drag on the market after the war is over.

The Italian government wants to stay neutral, even if it has to fight some of its own folks at home.

There are, no doubt, violations of the "white slave" laws, but some of the arrests look more like blackmail.

Europeans are fighting to save their respective countries, and over here we have got to work to save ourselves.

Lord Kitchener, who says it will take three years to end the war, may be a good prophet, but he is not an optimist.

Heard a lady say the other day that she thinks the Spugs are insane. Maybe so, but there is method in their madness.

It is said that there are fifty-seven kinds of money circulating in Mexico. And we don't suppose the best of it is worth more than 30 cents a hatful.

THE OPEN FORUM.

Why Remove the Hat in a Public Elevator?

Editor of The Washington Herald: Too many of our readers are writing about the elevator hat business, I am inclined to ask two or three questions, and make a suggestion.

Is a public elevator in a public building a public conveyance? If so, why should a gentleman remove his hat when there is a lady, or ladies, in the elevator, any more than he should be expected to take his hat off in a street car? If there is a reason, would he like to know what that reason is?

If you say it is courteous or it shows respect for the lady, why not show that respect in a street car?

A Plea for Harry Thaw.

Editor of The Washington Herald: The civilized Christian world will ever honor the efforts put forth by the American people to relieve the suffering mothers and children in war-torn Europe. Those who have so faithfully and so freely given to this most worthy cause have certainly adhered to the "new commandment" given by the lowly Nazarene, "that ye love one another as I have loved you," etc.

But the duty of Christians should not be limited to helping the mothers and children in far-away Europe. They must not neglect to relieve the suffering mothers and children on the American continent as well. It is said that there is no love like that of a mother's love for her children. And every mother should feel herself duty bound to do whatever she can to make glad the hearts of her children. And this brings me to the subject of the "new commandment" given by the lowly Nazarene, "that ye love one another as I have loved you," etc.

Now, cannot the Christians of this country condemn the injustices done to those within their own gates and start at once to make glad the hearts of the poor and the oppressed?

The Japanese plan to build a canal by the way, but the river in American law, the tariff was prepared to fully deliver the goods, and the fault for non-payment is the fault of the Japanese.

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PURELY A BUSINESS MATTER.

America Advised to Take Advantage of the "Turned Tables."

But for this terrible war England, Germany, France, and Belgium would be taking fully \$100,000,000 of good American money in exchange for rotten and worn-out goods, and a certain element of our population would be complaining of the great wrong by demanding the "imported" cloth regardless of quality or condition.

Consequently the only course left to the common people of this country is to remove the cause by removing the perpetration of the greatest crime in American history—the Wilson-underwood tariff. Prior to the agitation the country was prosperous; labor and capital was getting a good return for service and investment, and all industry was preparing for, if not actually engaged in, substantial expansion. The agitation set the ball rolling down hill, and the tariff tied put on the hand arising touchers. At the present time the outlook is brighter and in a way the tables are turned. England, France, Belgium and Germany are calling upon us for cloth, and we are making a mistake in not pricing their products high enough to make up for some of the losses to labor and capital for the past two or three years.

There is no sentiment in the matter when it comes to business between buyer and seller. We will give freely to the sufferers in Europe, to the non-combatants, but the fighters are another matter. Here is a cold-blooded proposition of business. Soldiers must be clothed, and the government must pay the cost. Our mills have their own to care for and that should be the first consideration. The tariff is a barrier to anything. Make prices on a parity with wool under an English embargo. Make England pay well for her unbuttoned coats, and we will get the goods from Australia and New Zealand. France and Belgium are in the same boat with England and it will be some satisfaction to turn the tables on these countries.

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Rex Beach--How He Grew Up

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

"I WAS born in 1877. My folks lived on a farm among the chibblains of Michigan until I had reached the precocious little age of seven. The climate was fierce and the grub was worse. There was nothing to eat up there except frozen apples. At this period my father, suddenly discovering that he had frozen the feet of every member of the Beach family, decided quite wisely to move south—as far south as the weather was room to move. We started for Florida via the hasty and interesting Mississippi River.

"Well, wet got to Florida, engaged in the business of growing oranges and sending Rex to school, and froze out down there. We were sorry—it was so much like Michigan. Everybody went broke. This, too, was like Michigan. There was nothing to eat but frozen oranges. So I went to Chicago to study law. Every morning I packed a law book and some arm and an apple and glass of milk under the other, and went'lawing. All to no avail, however—all to no avail. Then I learned to be a football player.

"I introduced myself to the captain of the Chicago Athletic Association team and said I felt in me the vicious hunger to be brutal and wear shinguards and have my name in the sporting papers and board at a training table. He looked me over and felt my bumps, then asked me if I was a good player. 'Immense,' I assured him with becoming modesty.